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ABSTRACT

As educators have come to realize that problems as complex as undereducation, illiteracy, lack of minority educational success, and poverty are too overwhelming for any single institution to address on its own, they have formed inter-institutional educational alliances. In the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), a community college-university alliance marked the first inter-institutional wave. The second wave began in 1983 after the Arizona state legislature mandated coordination of high school and community college employment preparation programs, resulting in course credit articulation, occupational credential acceptance, and resource coordination. The latest wave of inter-institutional cooperation has produced the Think Tank project, an alliance spanning all levels of education, ranging from kindergarten through postsecondary education. The goal of Think Tank is to use the collective resources of member elementary, high school, and community colleges within the greater Phoenix urban area to insure that students enter, re-enter, and remain in school until their maximum learning potential and goals are realized. Achieving a College Education (ACE) programs are the hallmark of the Think Tank project. ACE alliances are multifaceted, involving the following key elements: early recruitment, scholarships, student assessment and placement, parental involvement, summer institutes for high school students, a sense of family between students and staff, financial aid, and problem-free transfer. In addition to the ACE programs, Think Tank has established a number of other cooperative programs, including on-line and on-site registration, on-line library access, parenting literacy, and an urban teacher corps. A list of inter-institutional educational alliances coordinated by the MCCCD is attached. (JMC)

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INTER-INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES AS AN AT-RISK STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

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Title of Presentation: **Inter-Institutional Educational Alliances as an At-Risk Student Recruitment and Retention Strategy**

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Title: Occupational Program Specialist

Organization: Maricopa County Community College District

Description: Alliances are arising as educators realize that modern societal problems are simply too overwhelming for any one institution to solve on it's own. The Maricopa Community Colleges and Centers have pioneered development of high school to community college and community college to university alliances. It has been the experience of the Maricopa Colleges and Centers that while coordination of curriculum is helpful the coordination of curriculum itself is not an effective recruitment or retention mechanism. It takes employment of ***"The essential elements of ACE"*** for an alliance to become an effective strategy for the recruitment and retention of at-risk students.

Abstract

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES AS AN AT-RISK STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGY

Alliances have appeared as educators realize that modern societal problems are simply too overwhelming for any institution to solve on it's own. Community colleges are in a position to cultivate inter-institutional educational alliances as they are in the middle: High school graduates matriculate to community colleges and community college students matriculate to four-year colleges and universities.

Think Tank exemplifies the latest inter-institutional educational alliance thought. It is the goal of Think Tank "To use the collective resources of member elementary, high school, and community colleges within the greater Phoenix urban area to insure that students enter, re-enter, and remain in school until their maximum learning potential and goals are realized." ACE programs (Achieving a College Education) are the hallmark of Think Tank.

It is the goal of ACE...

> *"to retain students in high school, to orient them and their parents to post-secondary education and to build the bridges necessary for successful transfer to a community college and eventual attainment of a baccalaureate degree."*

ACE alliances are complex entities involving the following essential elements...

* Early Recruitment
* Scholarships
* Assessment
* Parental Support
* Summer Institutes
* Sense of Family
* Financial Aid
* Problem-free Transfer

It has been the experience of the Maricopa Community Colleges and Centers that ACE alliances attract and retain large numbers of high school students. For example, more than 1,000 high school students participated in 1990 Summer Institutes and more than 420 students are currently participating in the ACE Program at South Mountain Community College.

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INTRODUCTION

Inter-Institutional Educational Alliances have appeared as educators have come to realize that modern societal problems are simply too overwhelming for any one institution to solve on it's own. All educators must work together if the education establishment is to have a positive impact on citizens' lives.

The problems facing citizens in the Greater Phoenix Area are similar to problems facing the citizens of all large American cities. Some of these problems include...

* ***Lack of a high school diploma.*** According to the latest information we know that more than 1,600 Phoenix Union High School District seventeen year old students will not graduate this year as they should because even though they have been enrolled in high school for more than three years they have completed fewer than five high school classes. An even larger number of young people have simply given up. More than 3,000 young people drop out of the Phoenix Union High Schools each year. Lack of a high school diploma makes it very difficult for a young person to compete for a good paying job in today's workplace.

* ***Illiteracy.*** Currently, 13% of all of the 17 year olds enrolled in the Phoenix Union High School District are functionally illiterate and 44% are only marginally literate. Literacy is a fundamental requisite for full participation in modern American society.

* ***Lack of minority educational success.*** Minority citizens are much less likely to complete a high school diploma, or earn a college or university degree, than are members of the majority population. At this time, 55% of the entire Phoenix Union High School enrollment consists of students from minority populations. Minority students account for as much as 73% of the total enrollment in some Phoenix urban elementary school districts. It is education that places a citizen in a position of advantage in the United States of America. An increase in the number of minority citizens who experience success in the educational system must occur if this nation is to be a place of opportunity for all citizens.

* ***Poverty.*** More than 10% of everyone who resides in Maricopa County lives in poverty: 36% of those living in poverty are under the age of 18 and in some inner city school districts as many as 40% of all students receive subsidized lunches because their families meet the stringent federal poverty guidelines. Completion of a formal education is the way out of poverty that works best for the majority of persons most of the time.

The above are only four examples of the many problems facing citizens who reside in the Greater Phoenix Area and the citizens of any other large America urban community. The problems are overwhelming.

INTER-INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES

Community colleges are in a position to foster Inter-Institutional Educational Alliances because they are in the middle. High school graduates matriculate to a community college for employment preparation or to complete the first two years of a baccalaureate degree. This has been occurring for more than twenty-five years. What is new is the establishment of formal Inter-Institutional Educational Alliances in an effort to coordinate high school, community college and university curriculum so that students can progress without duplication of time, energy or expense.

Inter-Institutional Educational Alliances have evolved as "Waves of Innovation." The Maricopa Community Colleges are now riding the third such wave and a fourth is beginning to swell. Each wave has built upon those which came before.

Development of the community college - university alliance constituted the first Inter-Institutional Alliance wave because the University Transfer Education mission has historical precedence. Community college to university transfer policies and procedures have been in effect for so many years they are well institutionalized.

University equivalents to the almost 6,000 courses in the Maricopa Community Colleges Course Bank have been negotiated and are published annually in a ***"Course Equivalency Guide."*** Persons who have successfully completed an equivalent course at a community college may apply credits earned in this way towards a baccalaureate degree when they transfer to one of the three State of Arizona public universities.

The second wave began in 1983 after the Arizona State Legislature mandated coordination of high school and community college employment preparation programs. Legislators had three goals: 1) Improvement in the quality of high school instruction; 2) Coordination of curriculum so that students could progress without duplication of time, energy or expense; 3) More cost-effective use of expensive vocational education laboratories.

This high school-community college employment preparation alliance took three forms:

* ***Course Credit Articulation:*** The Maricopa Community Colleges award college credit to high school graduates who have mastered the competencies equivalent to a college course.

* ***Occupational Credential Acceptance:*** Maricopa Community College based Nursing Programs award college credit to students who have previously earned a Nursing Assisting Certificate or Practical Nursing License.

* ***Resource Coordination:*** Maricopa Community Colleges based employment preparation programs teach some courses in nearby high school vocational education laboratories.

The latest high school - community college employment preparation alliance schema is being promoted by the United States government in the form of ***"Tech Prep."*** The federal government is providing monetary grants to high schools and community colleges that agree to develop coordinated employment preparation programs that lead to a community college Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree in the fields of engineering, applied science, industrial technology, allied health or nursing or in a trade.

The third wave of Inter-Institutional Academic Alliance is exemplified by THINK TANK. Think Tank is an alliance of the entire kindergarten through doctorate-level education establishment of urban Phoenix, Arizona. The goal of Think Tank is...

> *"to use the collective resources of member elementary, high school, and community colleges within the Phoenix urban area to insure that students enter, re-enter, and remain in school until their maximum learning potential and goals are realized."*

Achieving a College Education (ACE) programs are the hallmark of Think Tank. It is the goal of ACE...

> *"to retain students in high school, to orient them and their parents to post-secondary education and to build the bridges necessary for successful transfer to a community college and eventual attainment of a baccalaureate degree."*

ACE alliances are complex entities involving a number of interrelated elements. ***The essential elements of ACE*** include:

* ***Early Recruitment.*** ACE programs recruit high school students between their ninth and tenth grades with the understanding that they are entering a program that will culminate in a baccalaureate degree. Emphasis is placed on the baccalaureate degree but ACE Staff also stress attainment of short-term goals and development of the employment preparation skills a person needs to support him or herself. Attainment of the baccalaureate degree is emphasized as an ultimate goal because it is a valuable credential in today's world and it is important that children and their parents not be limited in vision.

  ACE programs recruit young high school students from the middle two quartiles of academic achievement who have a desire to attend college. Many ACE students are first-generation college students from families with limited financial resources.

* ***Scholarships.*** Each ACE Student is given a small scholarship to pay the cost of tuition. Receiving a scholarship makes it possible for economically disadvantaged students to attend college and helps each ACE Students realize that he or she is a special person in a special program.

* ***Assessment for Success.*** ACE programs assess students after they are enrolled as a way to ascertain academic and study skills and career interests. Assessment results are used to facilitate placement in classes that are challenging but not beyond a student's ability. Remedial instruction is provided when appropriate.

* ***Parental Support.*** ACE programs hold meetings to orient parents to the goals and expectations of the program and what they can do to help their children achieve a

college education. Basic adult education skills classes are also made available to parents who need this type of knowledge.

* ***Summer Institutes.*** ACE programs feature institutes on college campuses each summer as a way for high school students to become familiar with the college environment, to identify career goals and to earn college credit that can be applied towards a college degree. Students begin taking courses in the summer between their ninth and tenth grades and then continue each summer until they graduate from high school. Examples of the courses in which high school students enroll include:

  AAA 150-Career Planning
  AAA 101-Activated Learning
  ARH 100-Introduction to Art
  BPC 100-Introduction to Personal Computers
  SOC 101-Introduction to Sociology.

* ***Sense of Family.*** ACE Staff try to create a sense of family between ACE Students and Staff. For example, ACE Students may be provided name badges, T'Shirts and other memorabilia that makes it easy for ACE Students to identify each other and for Faculty and Staff to identify ACE Students.

Parenting is also involved. ACE Staff maintain continuous contact with students who have been recruited into the program. A computerized program has been created to help accomplish this most important task. Labeled ***SMASh (Student Monitoring and Alert System),*** this new computerized program monitors the academic achievement, attendance and behavioral patterns of ACE students and then notifies ACE Staff if a student appears to be having a problem. Early notice makes it possible for ACE Staff to intervene in a positive way before a student is in serious trouble.

In addition, ACE programs offer college classes to high school students throughout the academic year. This makes it possible for ACE Students and Staff to continue their relationship while ACE Students earn college credit which they can apply towards a college degree. It has been the experience of ACE Staff that ACE students prefer to attend these classes on the college campus and that Saturday is the day when students are most likely to attend such classes. Examples of the college classes most popular with ACE Students are as follows:

COM 110-Nonverbal communication (3 credits)
ENG 071-Review of English fundamentals (3 credits)
ENG 081-Freshman English review (2 credits)
ENG 085sa-Writing notes and summaries from an oral presentation (1 credit)
ENG 085sb-Writing notes and summaries from written presentation (1 cr)
ENG 101-Freshman English (3 credits)
ENG 102-Freshman English (3 credits)
GTC 100-Introduction to Technology (3 credits)
HIS 103-United States History to 1870 (3 credits)
HIS 104-United States History from 1870 to present (3 credits)
RDG 081-Reading improvement (3 credits)
RDG 091-College reading skills (3 credits)
RDG 101- Critical and evaluative reading I (3 credits)
WKO 108-Work Orientation (1 credit)

* ***Financial Aid Information.*** ACE students and their parents receive financial aid information in the form of special classes on how to apply for and receive financial aid plus tuition, fee and book scholarships. The goal is to insure that lack of financial resources does not prevent any student from achieving a college education. The ***Maricopa Foundation,*** a non-profit corporation that provides support to the Maricopa Community College District, coordinates this aspect of the program.

* ***The Community College Experience.*** High school graduates in ACE programs enroll in highly structured community college programs which consist of coursework that can be transferred to the three State of Arizona public universities and applied towards a baccalaureate degree.

* ***Problem-Free Transfer.*** To earn a baccalaureate degree is the ACE student goal. Students must transfer to a university to complete the last two years of their baccalaureate degree program. ACE staff do what they can to make this transfer as problem-free as possible.

  ACE students become familiar with the university environment by attending special orientation sessions that are held on-campus at Arizona State University, by attending a summer session at Arizona State University and through concurrent university-community college enrollment during their final semester at one of the Maricopa Community Colleges.

It has been the experience of the Maricopa Community Colleges that ACE programs attract large numbers of high schools students. For example, more than 1,000 high school students participated in the most recent Summer Institutes and more than 420 students are currently being monitored by the SMASh program at one college alone.

While ACE programs are the hallmark of this latest Inter-Institutional Educational Alliance, Think Tank has established a number of other important cooperative programs as well:

* ***On-Line & On-Site Registration.*** High school students can now receive college orientation information, be tested, be advised and actually register for college courses without leaving their home high school.

* ***On-Line Library Access.*** High school students can now access the entire Maricopa County Community College District library from computer terminals located in their home school libraries and are welcome to use Maricopa Community Colleges and Centers.

* ***Parenting Literacy.*** Parents of 4th through 6th grade students now have an opportunity to attend special classes where they can learn the communication skills they need to become more effective participants in the education of their children.

* ***Urban Teacher Corps.*** The Maricopa Community Colleges and Arizona State University are developing a program that will make it possible for currently employed nonprofessional elementary and high school staff to complete the college and university coursework necessary for them to become upgraded to professional status.

Now, even before third wave educational alliances have peaked, fourth wave alliances are beginning to swell.

"The Academic Alliance" is a national movement. In Maricopa County this movement involves associations of mathematics, science and English as a Second Language faculty from the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels. It is the goal of "Alliance" faculty to foster a collective responsibility for the education of all students who are enrolled in the disciplines which they teach regardless of the grade in which their students are enrolled.

"The Seamless Web" is an Arizona State University - Maricopa Community College District alliance. Launched during the 1989-90 academic year, it is the intent of the founders of the Seamless Web to encourage talented minority community college students to consider matriculation to a university and completion of baccalaureate, masters and doctorate degree programs. The long-term goal is to increase the number of minority persons who become college and university faculty where they can serve as role models for minority students.

If the Maricopa experience in any way mirrors what is occurring in community colleges elsewhere across the United States of America this has become the age of the Inter-Institutional Educational Alliance. Descriptions of current Maricopa Community College District programs that exemplify this advancement are included as an Appendix to this paper.

CLOSING

The United States of America is a nation with major societal problems. An unacceptable number of young people fail to earn a simple high school diploma, a large percentage of the population is either illiterate or only marginally literate, many citizens live in poverty and less than 25% of all minority citizens ever obtain the benefits to be derived from post-secondary education.

The fact that it will require an alliance of all citizens to create solutions to the challenges which face this nation makes sense. Just as the all of the above problems are inter-related, the reality of the situation is that all citizens of the United States of America share the same habitat. Whatever affects one citizen of the United States of America affects every citizen of the United States of America.

It is obvious that community colleges by themselves, nor any other segment of this society, have the resources necessary to address the challenges which face this nation alone. But the challenges are addressable. Business/industry-education and inter-institutional educational alliances are being formed, issues are being identified, programs are being put into place and impressive progress is sometimes being made.

OPERATIONAL
INTER-INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCES
currently coordinated by the
MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

ACADEMIC ALLIANCES: *Gail Shay* of GateWay Community College is responsible for development of an English as a Second Language (ESL) Academic Alliance. This is a local professional organization of peers -- teachers of a common discipline from elementary school through college. The goal of this program is to foster collective responsibility among area ESL teachers from elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels for the quality of ESL teaching and learning. Math and science and English teachers have also organized Academic Alliances.

ACE (ACHIEVING A COLLEGE EDUCATION): *Stella Torres* coordinates this South Mountain Community College - Phoenix and Tempe Union High School Districts *THINK TANK* program. The goal is to increase the number of at-risk high school students who receive baccalaureate degrees after having successfully completed high school and having earned a community college degree. Tenth grade high school students from surrounding schools attend college credit summer institutes at South Mountain Community College after completion of 10th and 11th grades and take college courses at their home high schools during 11th and 12th grades. Consistent personal and academic support and scholarships are provided.

ACE PLUS (ACHIEVING A COLLEGE EDUCATION PLUS): *Pat Brodie* coordinates this new Glendale Community College - Glendale and the Phoenix Union High School Districts *THINK TANK* program. The intent is to incorporate features of the ACE program in ways that enable high school students to both matriculate into occupational programs and/or transfer to a university.

AIMES (ACHIEVEMENT IN MATH, ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE): *Robin McCord* of Chandler/Gilbert Community College Center and *Saundra Minckley* of Mesa Community College administer this program at their respective campuses. The goal is to recruit minority ninth grade students from nearby schools into programs that will lead to success in math, engineering, and science careers. Program components include special high school courses that are taught at the student's home school, summer placement and other incentives.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL: *Margaret Hogan* is the administrator responsible for this Chandler/Gilbert Community College Center - Chandler High School *THINK TANK* program. The Alternative High School makes it possible for students who have experienced limited success in their regular high school program to complete their high school requirements on a college campus. Guided independent study and computer assisted instruction make it possible for the Alternative School to offer any course that a student needs. The intent is to reduce the Chandler High school dropout rate and increase the number of Chandler High School graduates who choose to attend Chandler/Gilbert Community College Center.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE to UNIVERSITY ARTICULATION: *Irene Wright* coordinates community college to university articulation for the Maricopa Community College District. The intent is to insure problem-free transfer from one institution to the other. University equivalents to Maricopa Community College's almost 6,000 courses are negotiated through Irene's office and then published in an annual ***COURSE EQUIVALENCY GUIDE.*** The "Guide" is then used by high school, community college and university students, faculty and counselors to plan transferrable programs of study.

COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL CENTER FOR MINORITIES (CRCM): *Dr. Ernesto Ramirez* is director of this major new National Science Foundation funded Project. It is the goal of CRCM to recruit minority students into the math, engineering and science-based programs and to provide them with the support necessary to be a success. CRCM efforts are closely coordinated with the MCCCD AIMES and MESA programs.

CONNECTION "The:" The goal of this South Mountain Community College project is to connect African-American students with historically black colleges and universities.

COURSE CREDIT: *Willie Minor* is the Phoenix College administrator responsible for coordination of the 48 operational Course Credit articulation agreements which exist between Metro Tech VIP and Phoenix College. Course Credit articulation agreements are also operational at six of the sister Maricopa Community Colleges and eleven surrounding high school districts.

CRISIS IN THE WORKPLACE: *Dr. Paul Elsner, Daniel Yanklovich, the American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), and the Republic and Gazette* are collaborating on this nationwide project. The goal is to go to the grassroots of public opinion and learn what citizens want, and are willing to pay for, in terms of public education.

GENESIS: *Nancy Jordan* is the administrator responsible for this new Phoenix College - Phoenix Union High School District program. The goal is to help pregnant teenage girls earn a high school diploma and matriculate to Phoenix College.

GUADALUPE LEARNING CENTER: *Amalia Villegas* is coordinator of this South Mountain Community College program. Guadalupe is a small community on the outskirts of Phoenix in which reside a large number of persons who are "at-risk" of failing in the traditional educational system because of economic and other reasons. The Guadalupe Learning Center makes it possible for high school dropouts to acquire basic skills, earn a high school diploma and matriculate to South Mountain Community College.

MESA (MATHEMATICS, ENGINEERING, SCIENCE ACHIEVEMENT): *Jose Mendoza* coordinates this mature Glendale Community College - Dysart Unified District, Glendale Union High School District and Peoria Unified District program. Minority ninth grade students, who appear to have unrealized academic potential, are recruited into special MESA classes that are taught in the student's home school. Classes continue for all four high school years. College scholarships, summer placement and other incentives are included. Approximately 90% of all MESA Alumni have scored better than the 85th percentile of their high school graduating class and almost 100% have continued on to college.

OCCUPATIONAL CREDENTIAL ACCEPTANCE: The nursing program Occupational Credential Acceptance articulation agreements have been written into the policy statements by which all of the Maricopa Community College's nursing programs abide. *John Bradley* can provide information about the status of this process.

PENDERGAST PROJECT "The:" *Dennis Blosser* coordinates this Maricopa Skill Center - Pendergast Middle School Project. Seventh and eight grade students who are at-risk of failure spend up to three-hours per day at the Maricopa Skill Center where they are exposed to vocational training and complete a special pre-vocational curriculum.

PROJECT DIPLOMA: *Valentina Vega* coordinates this Rio Salado and South Mountain Community Colleges program. The goals of this "General Equivalent Diploma (GED) program is to provide high schools dropouts with the remedial instruction they need to graduate with their cohort high school class and to then enroll them in college-level course work at Rio Salado and South Mountain Community Colleges.

RESOURCE COORDINATION: *Willie Minor* is also responsible for management of the Resource Coordination articulation agreement which exists between Phoenix College and Metro Tech VIP.

STEP (STUDENT TECHNICAL EDUCATION PREPARATION): *David Annala* coordinates this GateWay Community College - Tempe and Phoenix Union High School Districts *THINK TANK* program. High school students complete specially designed applied academics courses that are prerequisite to technology oriented occupational programs at GateWay Community College. The intent is to increase the science and math ability of students entering technology oriented programs and thereby enhance their ability to earn an associate degree, obtain a technology-based job, and further their education without duplication of time, effort or expense.

THINK TANK: *Liz Warren* administers the District Support Services Center office.

THE MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES & CENTERS

District Support Services Center -- P.O. Box 13349; Phoenix, Arizona 85002
Phoenix College --- 1202 West Thomas Road; Phoenix, Arizona 85013
Glendale Community College --- 6000 West Olive Avenue; Glendale, Arizona 85302
GateWay Community College --- 108 North 40th Street; Phoenix, Arizona 85034
Mesa Community College --- 1833 West Southern Avenue, Mesa, Arizona 85202
Scottsdale Community College --- 9000 East Chaparral Road; Scottsdale, AZ 85253
Rio Salado Community College --- 640 North 1st Avenue; Phoenix, Arizona 85003
South Mountain Community College --- 7050 South 24th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85040
Chandler/Gilbert Community College Center -- 2626 E Pecos, Chandler, AZ 85225
Paradise Valley Community College --- 32nd St @ Union Hills; Phoenix, AZ 85032
Estrella Mountain Community College Center -- 530 E Riley; Avondale, AZ 85323
Maricopa Skill Center --- 1245 East Buckeye Road; Phoenix, Arizona 85034

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